



The Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2024



World Environment Day (WED) puts a global spotlight on the pressing environmental challenges of our times. This UN international day, which is celebrated every year on 5 June since 1972, has become the largest global platform for environmental outreach, with millions of people from across the world engaging to protect the planet.

World Environment Day aims at being the biggest and most widely celebrated global day for positive environmental action and has grown to become one of the main vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and encourages concrete actions. It is a day when the people of the world are encouraged to come together and work towards a more environmentally sustainable future.

The theme for this year's WED is "Land restoration, desertification, and drought resilience". This theme calls for the protection and revival of ecosystems all around the world, which is critical to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. This year will also mark the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.

According to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, up to 40 per cent of the planet's land is degraded, directly affecting half of the world's population and threatening roughly half of global GDP. The number and duration of droughts has increased by 29 per cent since the year 2000 and, without urgent action, it is expected that droughts may affect over three-quarters of the world's population by 2050.

In the local context, Mauritius has a rich and diverse biodiversity. Apart from forests, agriculture, inland water, wetlands, coastal, and marine biodiversity, playing an essential role in providing important ecosystem services, they represent a key component of mitigation and adaptation measures for climate change impacts, disaster risk reduction, economy and human well-being. The rich biodiversity and forests play a significant role in the Mauritian economy by providing a range of ecosystem services, critical for the sustenance of the local community and forests act as a carbon sink.

However, these ecological assets are being threatened by the triple planetary crisis which are posing grave consequences to our planet and to our country. Climate change, pollution and loss of biodiversity are interconnected issues that have the potential to disrupt ecosystems, lives and livelihood, and exacerbate the already dire environmental challenges we are facing.

To commemorate WED 2024 and to use this driver to raise awareness, the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change has organised the **second edition of the Environmental Awards**. This activity will reward efforts of institutions and organisations which have engaged in sustainability and environmental best practices such as in initiatives to reduce carbon footprint, energy consumption and waste generation, use alternatives to plastic, optimise use of resources and curb down environmental nuisances.

Best submissions will be rewarded during a prize giving gala ceremony which will be held on Wednesday 5 June 2024 at the Caudan Arts Centre, Port Louis. We look forward for this event to inspire others to also embark on an ecological transformation and galvanise people, communities and organisations to contribute to the safeguard of our environment.

Happy World Environment Day 2024! Let's continue to work together to protect and preserve our beautiful planet for the future generations. Remember, every action counts. Let's make every day World Environment Day!

